

Laying the Foundation for an Urban Renaissance

Strengthening Our Communities

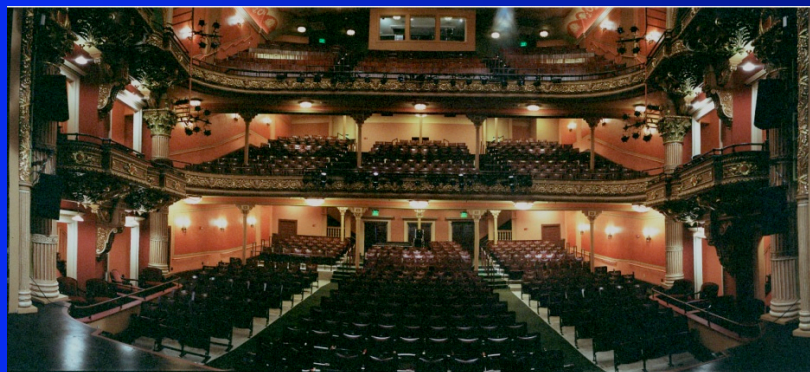
Gateway Cities: Innovative Strategies
for
Revitalization

November 13, 2012

Pittsfield – A City in the Country

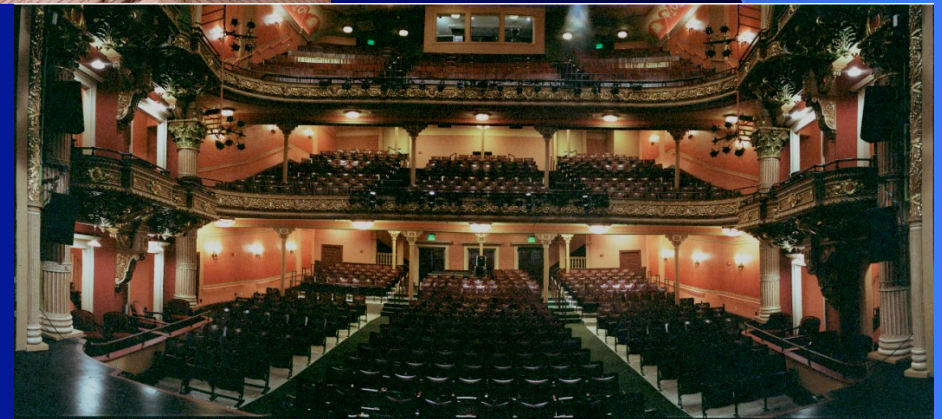
- Community of 44,000
- Located in center of Berkshire County
- Commercial, financial, medical/social service, & governmental hub of Berkshire County
- Historically an industrial community with GE employing 15,000 until 1980's
- Minimal arts & cultural presence

Creating a Vision

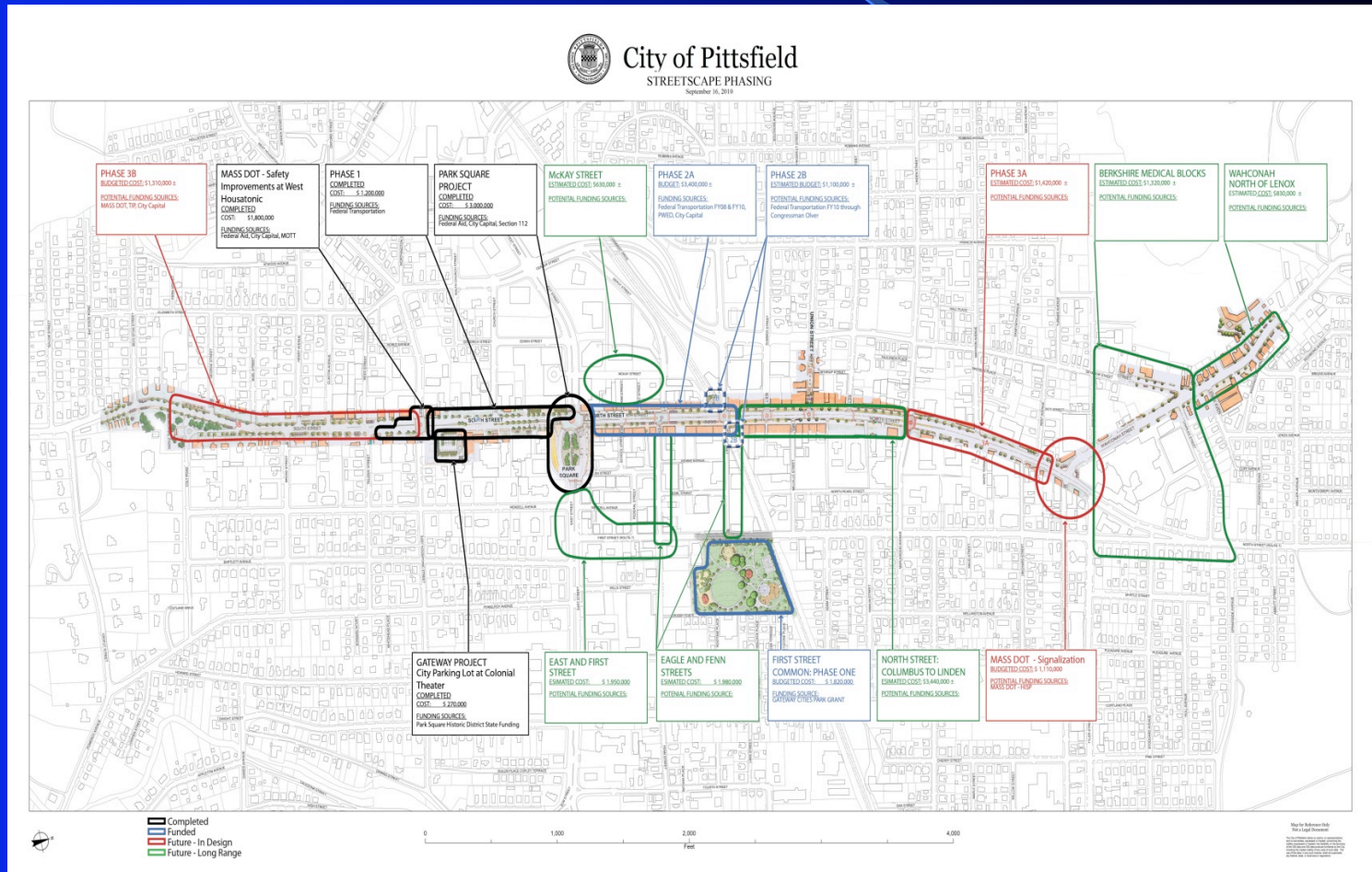


Defining the Work to be Done

1. Improving the streetscape & branding downtown
2. Changing the rules
3. Securing funding
4. Empowering a strong partner
5. Increasing housing choices



1. Streetscape & Branding

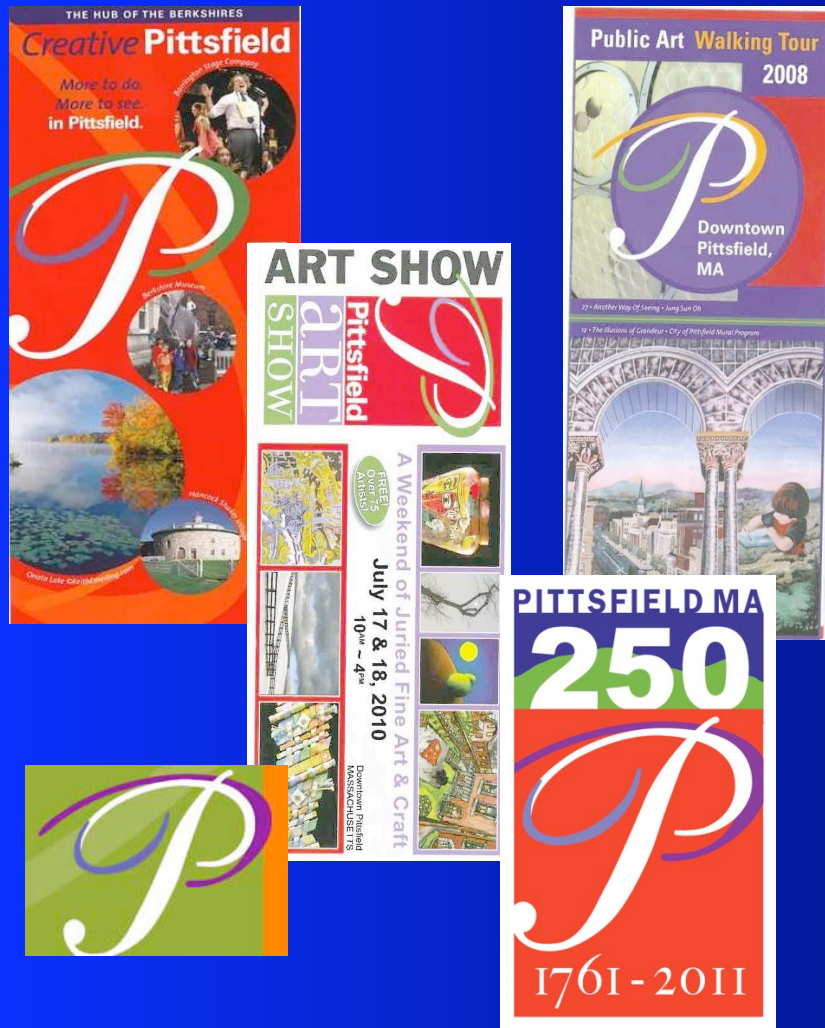


Streetscape

- Improving pedestrian spaces & safety
- Changing North-South access & slowing traffic
- Branding our community & downtown



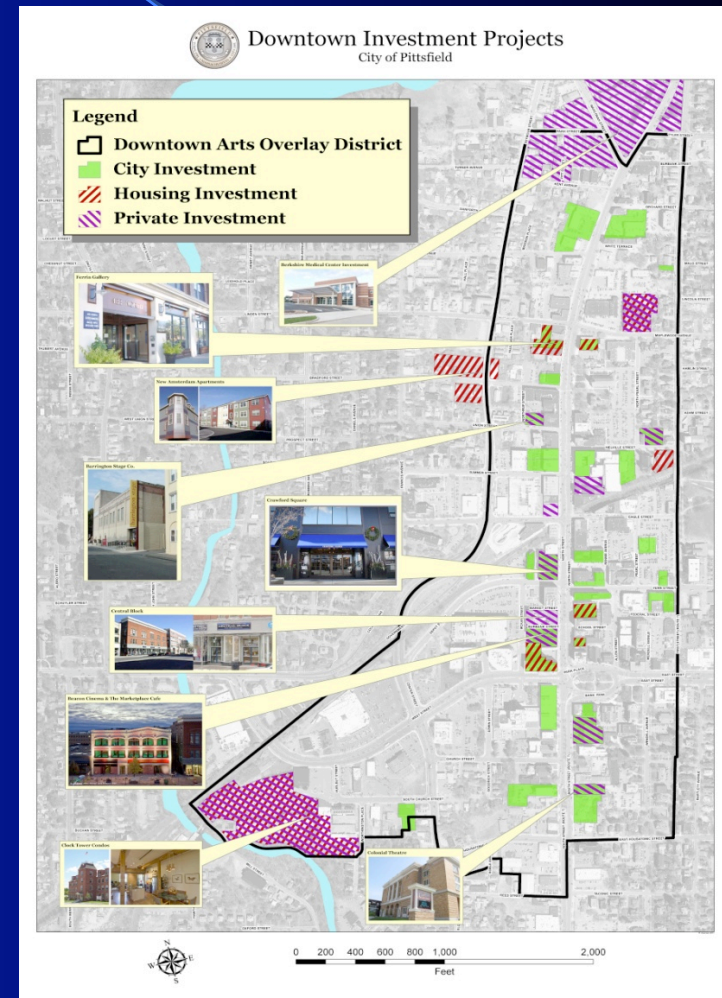
Branding



- Distinct & flexible image
- Linked to Vision
 - Creative, Entrepreneurial, Innovative, Tolerant & Compassionate
 - Best small city in NE
- Early “tangible” result
- Used everywhere
 - Webpage
 - E-newsletters
 - Special events
 - Banners

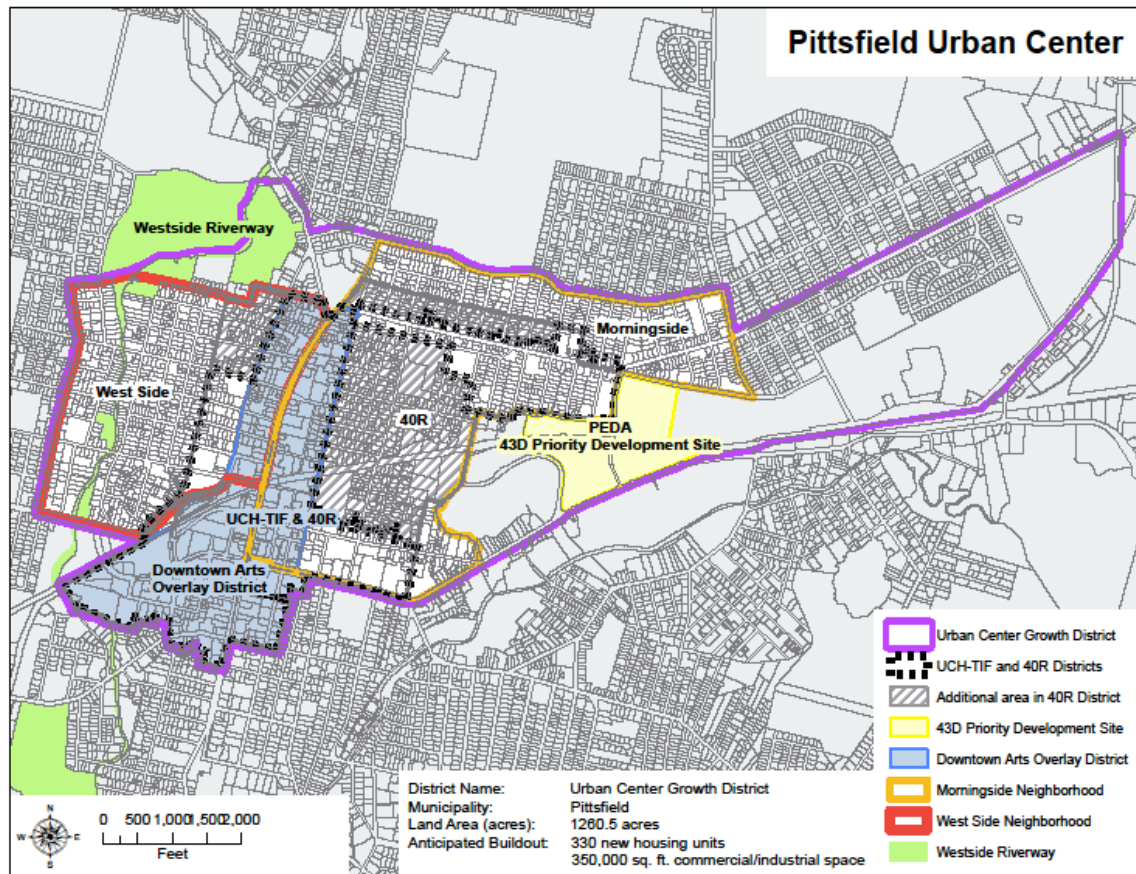
2. Changing the Rules

- Downtown Arts Overlay District
- Streamlined Permitting
- State initiatives
 - Urban Growth District
 - Priority Development Site
 - 40R
 - HDIP



- Formal Amendment to City's Zoning Ordinance
 - Overrides hodgepodge of underlying zoning
 - Encouraged creativity in reuse of vacant spaces
- Results
 - Sent a powerful message to building owners & investors
 - Streamlined permitting without losing control
 - 70+ new downtown housing units

State Initiatives



3. Securing Financial Resources

- Lack of financial resources was biggest obstacle to achieving vision
- Keys to securing needed resources:
 - Having a vision that people would invest in
 - Having the resources to actively participate in planning & pre-development efforts
 - Being creative & flexible
 - Aggressively pursuing any & all funding sources
 - Creatively using traditional tools: TIFs, Handicap accessibility, Small business assistance (grants and loans)
- Having funds of our own to invest

Investing Our Own Money

- Downtown Cultural Organizations
 - Colonial Theatre
 - Beacon Cinema Center
 - Barrington Stage Company
 - Berkshire Museum
- Using our investment to leverage other public & private investment
- Setting expectations, public accountability & securing our investments



4. Empowering our Partner

- Downtown Pittsfield Inc
 - Had a key role with anchor capital projects
 - Receives city funding support
 - Sponsor/partner for important events & initiatives
 - 501 (c) (3) status
- Critical link with business and property owners
- Evolving role



Downtown Pittsfield Strategic Plan

2010 - 2015



5. Expanding Housing Choices

- Market Rate
 - 2005 - Adoption of Downtown Arts Overlay District
 - Market Demand
 - Great views
 - City in the country
 - 2nd Home Costs & Desirability
 - Young Professionals
 - 2012 - Housing Development Incentive Program & creation of Housing Development District
- Affordable Housing
 - New Amsterdam
 - Silk Mill



HDIP – Leading the Way

- Onota Building, 64 North Street
 - Historic building
 - Conversion:
 - 5 retail spaces
 - 25 rental apartments
- Howard Building, 124 Fenn Street
 - Historic building
 - Conversion:
 - 5 retail spaces
 - 14 rental apartments



Planning to Thrive

- Efforts have resulted in:
 - 500,000+ people coming downtown each year
 - 70+ new market rate housing units (39 additional planned thru HDIP)
 - 45+ new businesses & restaurants
 - \$100M+ private investment
- Pittsfield has become a cultural destination in the heart of a cultural region
 - The work is never done
 - You have to be persistent
 - You need strong partners & alliances
 - State advocacy is important – Gateway Cities